

By analyzing carbon dioxide in ice cores, scientists have been able to create reliable measurements of atmospheric carbon dioxide going back over hundreds of thousands of years. The measurements of carbon dioxide at Clean Air Station provide a reliable comparison to document the impact of human activity on increasing carbon dioxide concentrations in recent years compared to the last hundreds of thousands of years. The melting is even more dramatic in the Northern Hemisphere. In the last 30 years, the Arctic has lost sea ice cover over an area 10 times as large as the State of Maine, and at this rate will be ice free by 2050. In 2005 in Barrow, AK, I witnessed a melting permafrost that is causing telephone poles, planted years ago, to lean over for the first time ever.

I also learned about the potential impact of sea level rise during my trips to these regions. If the West Antarctica Ice Sheet were to collapse, for example, sea level would rise 15 feet, flooding many coastal cities. In their 2007 report, the IPCC found that due even just to gradual melting of ice sheets, the average predicted sea level rise by 2100 will be 1.6 feet, but could be as high as 1 meter, or almost 3 feet. In Maine a 1-meter rise in sea level will cause the loss of 20,000 acres of land, include 100 acres of downtown Portland—including Commercial Street, a major business thoroughfare along the water. Already in the past 94 years, a 7 inch rise in sea level has been documented in Portland.

The time has come to take meaningful action to respond to climate change. My colleagues worked tirelessly in recent months to develop legislation that will preserve our environment for future generations while providing reasonable emission reduction goals, offsets, and incentives for the industries covered by the bill.

I applaud the leadership of my colleagues from Virginia, Connecticut, and California in bringing this bill to the floor this week.

RURAL COOPERATIVES

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I rise to engage in a colloquy with my friend, the junior Senator from Connecticut. I was pleased to co-sponsor the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act shortly after it was introduced last October, and I followed its progress through the Environment and Public Works Committee with interest.

Today, the full Senate will begin considering that bill, and Senator BOXER, the chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, will offer a substitute amendment that she has worked out with Senators LIEBERMAN and WARNER. I have a question for my friend from Connecticut regarding this substitute amendment.

As the Senator from Connecticut knows, many rural electric cooperatives in this country serve the role of local distribution companies. The committee-reported version of the Climate Security Act included rural electric cooperatives among the local distribution

companies that receive emission allowances over the entire 42-year life of the program. In Florida, electric cooperatives serve more than 1,000,000 Floridians in 58 of our 67 counties. Most of these rural electric cooperatives own fossil fuel-fired powerplants.

I was recently in Florida and held a series of town hall meetings across the State and heard from rural cooperatives that are concerned about the way emission allocations are distributed under the substitute amendment.

Can my friend from Connecticut address their concern and explain how allowances are available to rural cooperatives under the Boxer-Lieberman-Warner substitute amendment?

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I thank my friend, the senior Senator from Florida, for his question.

I would be glad to address the concern that rural electric cooperatives in Florida have brought to him.

Let me reassure him, and them, that the substitute amendment does include rural electric cooperatives among the local distribution companies that receive free emission allowances over the entire 42-year life of the program.

And let me reassure him, and them, that the substitute amendment does include rural electric cooperatives among the fossil fuel-fired powerplant owners that receive free emission allowances over a transitional period that lasts from 2012 through 2030. As in the committee-reported version of the bill, the separate allocation of free emission allowances that is exclusive to rural electric cooperatives in the substitute amendment is additional to the free emission allowances that rural electric cooperatives receive as local distribution companies and as fossil-fuel-powerplant owners. Under the substitute amendment, as under the committee-reported bill, rural electric cooperatives in Montana and Virginia are the only rural electric cooperatives in the country that receive free emission allowances solely from an exclusive allocation and not also from the bill's local-distribution-company and fossil-fuel-powerplant allocations. Indeed, there is a provision in the substitute amendment, section 552(c)(2)(C) that would be mere surplussage if the case were otherwise.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Connecticut for the clarification.

CONSUMER-FIRST ENERGY ACT OF 2008—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to Calendar No. 743, S. 3044, the Consumer-First Energy Act of 2008, at a time to be determined by the majority leader, following consultation with the Republican leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I object.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in light of that objection, I now move to proceed

to Calendar No. 743, S. 3044, and send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to S. 3044, the Consumer-First Energy Act of 2008.

Harry Reid, Barbara Boxer, Charles E. Schumer, Sheldon Whitehouse, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Patty Murray, Debbie Stabenow, Benjamin L. Cardin, Daniel K. Akaka, Jack Reed of Rhode Island, Claire McCaskill, Christopher J. Dodd, Amy Klobuchar, Patrick J. Leahy, Barbara A. Mikulski, Frank R. Lautenberg, Carl Levin.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture vote occur on Tuesday, June 10, at 12 noon with 20 minutes immediately prior to the vote equally divided and controlled by the two leaders or their designees, with the majority leader controlling the final 10 minutes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. I now ask that the cloture motion be withdrawn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The cloture motion is withdrawn.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have already expressed my appreciation to the staff for all their hard work. I have been informed by the minority that we need not be around here tonight having to vote on our ability to adjourn, so Senators, if they wish, can leave now and the two of us will terminate business. I thank everybody for their patience. I am sorry they had to come back tonight.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 6124

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 4 p.m. on Thursday, June 5—that is tomorrow—the Senate proceed to the consideration of